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TAGS: MOPS PARM PREL NATO UN AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA ON THE OSLO PROCESS

REF: SECSTATE 47101

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas Kelly for reasons 1.4 (b)
& (d).

¶11. (C) Summary: The Argentine Foreign Ministry theoretically supports a total ban on cluster munitions but, in fact, expects and is counting on a decision of partial prohibition.

Nor does the MFA anticipate a finalized draft to come out of the Dublin meeting, anticipating it will take until the end of the year before the draft convention is ready for signature. End Summary.

¶12. (C) PolOff met May 15 with Minister Gustavo Anchil in the MFA's Directorate for International Security, Nuclear and Space issues (DIGAN) to discuss reftel points. Anchil is the delegation head for the May 19-30 Dublin negotiating session.

Anchil was very forthcoming with the MFA's thoughts on the Oslo process. He started by stating that Argentina's public position is to support a total prohibition of cluster munitions. He noted that, politically, with the pressure from domestic human rights groups, the government had to support a ban. That said, he stated that the MFA did not expect a total prohibition to be the outcome. Anchil said he thought there was only a 2-3 percent chance of that outcome. He said they expected, at the end of the day, that a partial ban eventually would be agreed on that would set the technology "red line" sufficiently high to allow only the production/sale of an "intelligent class" of cluster munitions with such things as sophisticated guidance and self destruct mechanisms. He stressed, however, that we should not expect Argentina to take a lead on the partial prohibition issue. Anchil said that "Argentina supports total prohibition of cluster munitions and will not be the first to suggest partial prohibition, but neither will it be the last insisting on a total ban."

¶13. (C) Anchil explained that the GOA was not concerned with countries like the U.S. with significant internal controls and policies subject to public oversight and opinion. Argentina's concerns were with countries like China and India, which are not subject to these same constraints in their production and sales. He said that the convention required language that provided those constraints for countries not so "careful" as the United States. Anchil recognized that a partial ban, setting the technology bar high, would cost countries -- the U.S. included -- who would be forced to upgrade their arsenals, but was necessary to rid the world of lower-technology cluster weapons.

¶14. (C) Anchil explained that he did not expect the Dublin meeting to end with finalized language. He said European countries like Ireland and Norway were pushing to finalize text, to be signed at the end of the year, but Anchil said Argentina hoped for "mostly completed" text that they could use to consult with the parallel CCW process in the UN (meeting in July in Geneva).

WAYNE